

REMARKS

Claims 1-108 are now pending in the application. Applicant encloses herewith a Declaration under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 stating that the present invention was conceived and reduced to practice in the United States prior to the effective priority date of Lesea (U.S. Pat. No. 6,946,870). The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the Declaration and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 5, 6, 8, 10, 14, 18, 19, 21, and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Lesea (U.S. Pat. No. 6,946,870). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

At the outset, Applicant encloses herewith a Declaration under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 and associated evidence under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 stating that the present invention was conceived in this country prior to October 21, 2003, the U.S. filing date and effective §102(e) date of Lesea. Therefore, Lesea is not a valid prior art reference to the presently pending Claims, and Claims 1, 5, 6, 8, 10, 14, 18, 19, 21, and 23 are therefore allowable for at least this reason.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-5, 8-18, 21-33, 36-40, 42-51, 53-62, 64, 91-94, and 96-103 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cranford (U.S. Pat. No. 6,717,997) in view of Lesea. However, for at least the reasons set forth above, Lesea is not available as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). The Examiner has not relied upon

Cranford to teach the subject matter allegedly disclosed in Lesea, and therefore Cranford does not cure the deficiency of Lesea. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-5, 8-18, 21-33, 36-40, 42-51, 53-62, 64, 91-94, and 96-103 are allowable.

Claims 65-70, 72-83, and 85-90 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cranford in view of Lesea and Bishop (US 2005/0135299). However, for at least the reasons set forth above, Lesea is not available as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Neither Cranford nor Bishop has been relied upon to teach the subject matter allegedly disclosed in Lesea, and therefore also does not cure the deficiency of Lesea. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 65-70, 72-83, and 85-90 are allowable.

Claims 4 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lesea in view of Watannable (US 2003/0197498). However, for at least the reasons set forth above, Lesea is not available as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Watannable has not been relied upon to teach the subject matter allegedly disclosed in Lesea, and therefore also does not cure the deficiency of Lesea. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 4 and 17 are allowable.

Claims 7, 20, 34, 95, and 104 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cranford in view of Lesea and Ishikawa (U.S. Pat. No. 5,610,911). Neither Cranford nor Ishikawa has been relied upon to teach the subject matter allegedly disclosed in Lesea, and therefore also does not cure the deficiency of Lesea. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 7, 20, 34, 95, and 104 are allowable.

Claims 71 and 84 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cranford in view of Lesea, Bishop, and Ishikawa. As discussed above, Lesea is not available as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), and the Examiner has not relied upon Cranford, Bishop, or Ishikawa to disclose the subject matter allegedly disclosed in Lesea. Thus, Cranford, Bishop, and Ishikawa do not cure the deficiency of Lesea. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 71 and 84 are allowable.

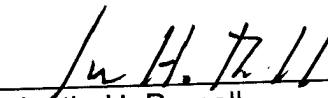
CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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